

{ 15.0.7
5645

THE

BLESSEDNESS OF THE PIOUS DEAD,

A SERMON

PREACHED APRIL 12TH, 1829,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH BRADY.

BY THE REV. A. WYLIE, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF INDIANA COLLEGE.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN P. HAVEN,

THEOLOGICAL BOOKSELLER,

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY HOUSE, 142 NASSAU STREET.

1829.

THE
BLESSEDNESS OF THE PIOUS DEAD,

A SERMON

PREACHED APRIL 12TH, 1829,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH BRADY.

BY THE REV. A. WYLIE, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF INDIANA COLLEGE.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN P. HAVEN,

THEOLOGICAL BOOKSELLER,

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY HOUSE, 142 NASSAU STREET.

1829.

H. C. Sleight, Printer,
No. 3, Marble Building, Chatham Square, New York.

TO THE
SURVIVING PARTNER,
THE WIDOWED MOTHER, AND OTHER FRIENDS OF THE
DECEASED,
THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS
A SMALL TRIBUTE OF
RESPECT FOR HER MEMORY,
BY THE AUTHOR.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Boston Regional Library System

SERMON.

REVELATION xiv. 13.

“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

DEATH is an event which ought to be regarded, with deep and serious interest, by all the living. None, indeed, can contemplate it without concern. For it breaks up, at once and forever, all our earthly schemes. It dissolves all earthly ties. It takes us away from all our enjoyments here. It tears us from the embraces of those who love us. It consigns our bodies to the enclosure of “the house appointed for all living,” there to moulder till awaked at the sound of the Archangel’s trumpet. It introduces the immortal spirit into a world unknown. It levels all artificial distinctions; and sends the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the master and his slave to their last account—to receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

As it respects the impenitent and unbelieving, death is connected with every thing that is terrible. To them it may well be considered “the king of terrors.” And, if I might indulge for a moment in the use of this personification, I would represent him, after the manner of an eastern monarch, when on a military expedition, occupying his posi-

tion in the centre of his troops. Before him march pestilence and famine and war, pains and diseases, accidents and plagues of every frightful shape, and the haggard forms of paleness and emaciation; and behind him, the darkness and solitude and oblivion—the corruption and putrefaction of the grave—the solemnities of the judgment—the worm that never dies, and hell's unquenchable, everlasting fires. His banner floats on the sighs of millions; and, as he “stalks in ghastly triumph” over the earth, he tramples down into the grave the loveliness of beauty, the pride and power of manhood, the hopes of the young and the props and solace of declining age. His course is as constant as that of time itself, and not a day passes but we meet some one or other of those harbingers whom he sends in advance to terrify poor mortals with the tidings of his approach. Meet him we must. We can turn aside into no path by which to avoid the dreaded rencounter; we can entrench ourselves behind no fortifications which can so much as retard his progress. Come he will: and when he shall arrive he will plant his victorious standard on the ruins of every thing that is perishable in our possessions, or our natures.

But, blessed be God, the gospel informs us of One who has conquered death and him that had the power of death, and who promises his followers a victory over all his terrors. The voice from heaven proclaims, in our text, that they are blessed who die in the Lord.

There are, in the text, a word and a phrase which need to be explained.

“Labors.” This word sometimes means such a degree of bodily exertion as induces fatigue. Here, as in many other places, it signifies such exercises both of mind and body as are attended with anxiety, vexation, pain and difficulty. Thus, for instance, “the labor of love,” an expres-

sion which frequently occurs in the New Testament, means such an earnest endeavor to do good to those whom we love as is necessarily attended with much care and pains. When Christ vindicated the conduct of the woman who poured precious ointment on his feet as he reclined at table, he said to his disciples, who had unjustly reproved her on that occasion: "Why trouble ye the woman"—literally, Why do ye afford "labors" to the woman. That is to say, why do ye create vexation in the mind of the woman, by casting upon her such unkind reflections; why do ye give pain to her generous spirit by your unmerited censures? The word has a similar meaning in our text; and very exactly indicates the nature of those *sufferings* which are *peculiar* to the pious in this world.

"In the Lord." This phrase points out the relation of believers to Christ as their covenant-head or representative. In the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, it is said that "*in Adam* all die, and in Christ shall all be made alive:" that is, those whom Adam represented in the covenant of works all experience natural death in consequence of his transgression, and those whom Christ represented in the covenant of grace shall all enjoy eternal life in virtue of his obedience; or, as the same apostle elsewhere expresses it, "as (Rom. v. 19.) by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." To be "in Christ," then, signifies to be represented by him, so that all which he did and suffered, his incarnation, his obedience, his death, his resurrection, his ascension to glory and his intercession at the right hand of Power, shall avail for the benefit of those whom he represented in these transactions, as though they had been done by them in their own proper persons. Hence they are said to be crucified with Christ—to be buried with him—to be risen with him—to be seated with him

in heavenly places. All these and similar expressions are to be referred to the principle of representation, on which the whole economy of our salvation is constructed—a principle which needs the less illustration among us, because it runs through the structure of our political institutions and is rendered familiar to us by the occurrences of every day.

In the prosecution of the subject before us we shall attend,

- I. To the character of those who are pronounced blessed in our text :
- II. To the date of their felicity, and
- III. To its nature and extent.

I. We are to attend to the character of those who are pronounced blessed in the text. They are those who are represented by Christ. And all, my hearers, are actually represented by Christ who are really and cordially willing so to be. We are naturally self-righteous, and slow to admit the conviction that our guilt and pollution are such as to render salvation impossible in any other way than by free grace, through the merits of that atoning sacrifice which Christ accomplished on the cross. So long as we cling to the hope, which every natural man cherishes, of recommending ourselves to the divine acceptance, we will not apply to Christ to recommend us. We must see and feel that God's law has demands against us as transgressors, which we cannot answer ; that our guilt and depravity, like the blackness of the Ethiopian's skin, cannot be removed by any means of our own devising ; that the question of our salvation is one of all-absorbing interest ; and that there is salvation in Christ for the chief of sinners, before we will apply to him, as our last and only refuge. When such an application is made, it is made with a proper regard to the authority of God as exercised in the person of the Divine

Redeemer. Hence, they who are in him, we notice in the 2d place, are in him as their "Lord."

Self, in some form or other, is the idol which all men naturally worship. Their own will is their supreme law; their own glory their ultimate end. They wish to prescribe and choose for themselves. They whom the text characterizes, have given themselves up, unreservedly to the Lord, to be his, and at his disposal. He made and redeemed them. They feel it right, therefore, that he should have dominion over them. They do not esteem his service a hard service. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. They love him for what he is, and for what he has done and suffered in their behalf. They are pleased with his commandments, as holy and just and good. For these reasons, they are determined to live not unto themselves, but unto Him that loved them and gave himself for them, considering his service their best employment here, and the everlasting enjoyment of his favor and presence their most desirable reward hereafter.

3. They are characterized, thirdly, by their labors, that is, sufferings in this world. They are said, at death, to cease from their sufferings. Life, therefore, is to them a scene of suffering. The truly pious, have more sufferings here, generally speaking, than those of an opposite character. They have their share in the natural evils of this life, and over and above this they have to endure sufferings peculiar to themselves. There are painful sensations which none but a virtuous mind can feel. Many of these arise from within. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh." "O wretched man that I am" exclaimed the apostle, sorely pained with this inward conflict, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Whoever will honestly try to maintain a conscience void of offence before God and man—to find out and steadily pursue

the path of duty, not only as to his outward deportment, but the motives and intimate movements of his heart, will find himself engaged in a difficult and painful employment. He will be constantly detecting within himself elements of depraved desire, atheism, unbelief, pride, and a thousand unhallowed affections and propensities, of which the outside moralist and the hypocritical professor are, seemingly, and perhaps really, unconscious, because their attention is occupied wholly with externals. With these inward troubles are often intimately connected others originating in the manifestation of depraved dispositions in other men. "I beheld transgressors and was grieved."—"Rivers of water run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law."—"I moan in my complaint and make a noise; because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me and in wrath they hate me. My heart is sore pained within me; and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said O that I had wings like a dove; then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo then would I wander afar off and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." Psalm 55. The course of this world is in opposition to religion, and the current of the corrupt passions and evil doings of the wicked has ever set in with the greatest force and violence against those of "whom the world was not worthy." He who aims at the accomplishment of base and selfish ends easily finds occasions, means and co-operators. He is under no necessity of selecting. They offer spontaneously and in abundance. To operate upon the evil passions and propensities of mankind, is easy. It requires no talent, and but little cunning. A man may be wise to do evil, and to do good have no knowledge. A bad man is seldom at a stand, because he makes no nice

distinctions and is regardless of consequences. It is not so with the good. They tremble for the ark of God and fear to give it a wrong touch. They cannot be at ease in Zion, because they are concerned for Zion's safety, peace, purity, and prosperity. They cannot see without concern the vices that abound in society; for they are not indifferent to the interests of society. They cannot contemplate, without painful emotions, sinners going on in their evil courses; for they see that "their day is coming." Wicked men may, indeed, occasion grief to each other, but it is on different principles. The malicious and revengeful may suffer from others as malicious and revengeful as themselves; but it is their own injuries which give them pain. The godly are more troubled for the wickedness which they meet with in the world, than for the evil treatment which they receive. Nay, they often feel more for those who inflict injury upon them, than from the injury itself; and are frequently melted into compassion when others would be carried away with resentment. The highest exemplification of this trait of character which could possibly be given was that which Jesus Christ exhibited on the cross—when he prayed, with his dying breath for his crucifiers: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do!" "Daughters of Jerusalem" said he to those women who followed him to Calvary and lamented the cruel treatment which he endured "weep not for me, but rather weep for yourselves and for your children." The moral sensibilities of those who are of the same spirit with Christ, and who, therefore, are really entitled to bear his name, cannot but be painfully affected in this world of pollution. They resemble Lot in Sodom, whose righteous soul was daily vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. The sufferings of the pious, arising from the contemplation of moral evil as existing within themselves, and as manifested in the conduct of others, are, both together, affectingly and beautifully set

forth in the complaint of Isaiah, upon obtaining that impressive vision of the majesty and holiness of God which is reported to us in the sixth chapter of his prophecies: "Woe is me, for I am undone! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips. For mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts. Those who are pronounced blessed in the text are characterized in the 4th place by their good works.

Good works, my hearers, afford the best and most unequivocal evidence of true religion. In these, indeed, it very much consists. Whenever you find an account of true religion given in the Bible, no matter how brief, you always find these constitute a principal part. "True religion and undefiled before God even the Father is this, to visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." "The Lord hath showed thee O man what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God." We must show our faith by our works, and that experience, however highly it may be esteemed by the deluded visionary, which does not improve the temper, amend the heart, and lead directly to acts of kindness and benevolence—especially when no requital can be expected—is a fallacy. A selfish and unsanctified temper usually seeks to cloak itself under the guise of zeal for something *about* religion. Sometimes it is a zeal for outward forms and ceremonial observances. This was the case with the pharisees. Sometimes it is a zeal for particular tenets, which serve as badges to distinguish a party. This is the case with those bigots of all times and places, who seek, on the strength of party, to raise themselves. Sometimes it is a zeal for augmenting the permanent revenues and resources of the church. This made Rome the mother of harlots. Sometimes it is a zeal for I know not what reveries, and feel-

ings, and impulses, by which some profess to have access to the mind and purposes of God, without the medium of his written word. This constitutes a species of spiritual knavery, which has always been too successful with the multitude.

O that the time were come when these false fires shall be forever extinguished in the church, and when heaven-born charity shall kindle a pure and holy flame on every altar, and in every heart! Then should the church stand forth arrayed in her "beautiful garments," characterized, in deed and in truth, as that church of Christ for whom he gave himself, "that he might purify it from all iniquity—a peculiar people *zealous of good works.*"

Do any ask, what are good works?

They consist in administering to the wants and relieving the miseries of mankind—in being "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame,"—in feeding the hungry and clothing the naked; instructing the ignorant, and reforming the vicious—in delivering the poor that crieth, the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him—in obtaining the blessing of him that is ready to perish, and causing the widow's heart to sing for joy—in breaking the jaws of the wicked, and plucking the spoil out of his teeth. See Job 29th chap.

Thus, have I endeavored, as briefly as I could, to follow the suggestions of the text, in giving the character of those whom it pronounces "blessed." Those who desire to have Christ to represent and to rule them, whose moral sensibilities have been so renewed and refined by grace as to render sin in themselves and others a source of grief and trouble, and whose course of life is distinguished by good works.

We proceed to notice in the

II. Place, the date of their felicity. It commences at their death, and not till that event. When we attempt to make this world the sphere of our happiness, we act in op-

position to the fixed purposes of Heaven. Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. The righteous are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. This is not their rest, for it is polluted. To settle down amidst the interests and pleasures of this life, would be to forfeit their immortal hopes. For to enjoy their "good things" here, is incompatible with the enjoyment of them hereafter. "Many are the troubles that afflict the just" in this world. They are more, usually, in number and weight, than fall to the lot of the wicked. It cannot be otherwise. The pollutions of this world cannot but be disgusting to the "pure in spirit." The disciples of Christ are as "sheep in the midst of wolves." Yet it must not be inferred from all this, that their condition is, *upon the whole*, less happy than that of the irreligious. If they have sufferings, they have strength also, and consolations, peculiar to themselves. And their consolations exceed those of the irreligious, by many degrees more than their sorrows. So that their state even in this world, is preferable. "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is."

Paul said, respecting himself and his companions, that, but for their hope in Christ, they should be "of all men the most miserable." This one ingredient sweetened the whole cup of his sufferings, and converted what were calamities in themselves, into occasions of joy and exultation: "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts abundantly, by the Holy Ghost given unto us."

They that are in the Lord may always be considered happy compared with those of an opposite character; yet, if their state be considered absolutely in itself, and still more if it be considered comparatively with respect to the happi-

ness which awaits them hereafter, they cannot be pronounced "blessed" till they die.

We proceed, in the

III. Place, to consider the *nature* of their felicity. It is mentioned in the text, under a two fold aspect. First, negatively: "they rest from their sufferings."

This is a situation—to be exempt from all suffering of every kind—which no one ever experienced in this world, and one, consequently, of which it is difficult to form an exact conception. Anxiety for the future, regret and grief for the past, have always disturbed our tranquillity, even when we were free from all cause of uneasiness from the present. But they who have died in the Lord, have entered upon a state of being where they shall never more experience the inconveniences of hunger, or thirst, or heat, or cold, or weariness, or sickness, or weakness, or depression of spirits—where they will never more have to complain of one irregular passion, or unlawful desire, nor of any of all those plagues of a heart but partially sanctified, which occasioned to them, while here, so much pain and trouble—where perfect love casteth out fear, and the vision of God drives away ignorance and doubt—where storms of temptation will never blow—where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest—where in a word, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Their happiness is also intimated positively: "Their works do follow them." "Eternal life" is in every case "the gift of God," and therefore, not bestowed as a reward merited by good works. But the enjoyment of the blessed in heaven will be in proportion to the good done or endeavored to be done, and the sufferings endured, in this life. The "righteous," shall all shine "as the brightness of the firmament, and like the stars for ever and ever in the kingdom of their Father." But there will be a gradation in their

bliss, as "one star differs from another star in glory." Nothing of good done by the saints here will be lost. Even a "cup of cold water" given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward.

The descriptions given in the word of God, of the glory and felicity awaiting the pious after death are, indeed, taken as they necessarily must be, from scenes with which we are here conversant; but they are of the most magnificent kind, and calculated to convey into our minds the most lively and exalted conceptions of the state and employments of the glorified in heaven. Their state is represented under the image of a city, whose streets are paved with gold, whose gates are massy pearls, whose inhabitants have no need of the light of the sun, nor of the moon, "for the glory of the Lord shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof—and are said to be made kings and priests unto God and they shall reign with him forever and ever. The representations of their employment in the heavenly world, are borrowed from the most joyous occasions ever known in this. They hold in their hands "palms," the emblems of victory, and sing to their golden harps songs of triumph, and chant anthems of praise to Him that loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood.

Leaving, however, these metaphorical representations which were intended to give us no more than vague and general conceptions of the glory and felicity of the heavenly state, let us endeavor to derive from the oracles of truth some information on this subject, which shall be more distinct and satisfactory.

First then, we observe that heaven is a state of perfect knowledge. Here we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then, face to face. There is no pleasure of which

our nature is susceptible, which can be compared, in point of dignity and importance, with that which arises from the discovery of truth. The desire of knowledge is one of the noblest characteristics of an immortal soul, and the gratification of it affords an exquisite delight even in the present state, where the advantages and opportunities for gaining information are so exceedingly limited, and when the process of acquiring it is so painful and tedious as often to become "a weariness to the flesh." What, then, will be the delight with which the capacity for knowledge will be filled, when the powers of the soul shall be enlarged, when it shall be raised to a more exalted sphere, and the intellectual eye shall contemplate truth in the light of immortality! — What interesting discoveries of God—of his works of creation, providence, and redemption, may we not suppose, shall burst upon the soul when introduced into that world of light and glory!

The heavenly state, we observe secondly, is a state of perfect harmony and love. An innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, with Jesus Christ the mediator of the new covenant and God the judge of all, will constitute one blessed society, where the interest of each in the happiness and love of all the rest will be complete. There the communion of all will be perfect, for they shall all be made "perfect in one." There will be no difference of views, no jarring interest, no dissimilarity of character, to interrupt the harmony of those regions of perfect love and friendship. There, full scope will be given to the exercise of love and gratitude, on the part of the "Redeemed from among men," toward the God-man, the incarnate Redeemer, who here bore their sins in his own body on the tree. And they "shall be like Him; for they shall see him as he is."

3. The heavenly state is a state of full fruition. Every

desire shall be gratified ; every want supplied. The whole capacity of the soul shall be replenished with delight. Their "joy shall be full." The faculties of the soul shall be ever expanding, to take in increasing measures of delight from those "rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand forevermore." God is infinite ; and the "vessels of mercy prepared unto glory," immersed in the ocean of his fullness, shall be always filled, yet always enlarging.

4. The glory and felicity of the heavenly state shall be everlasting. Count as many millions of ages as there have been moments since the creation, and multiply this sum by a number equal to the stars in the firmament, the sands on the sea shore, the drops that compose the ocean, the leaves of all the trees, and the blades of vegetation, over the face of the whole earth, square the product ; and when this mighty period of ages shall have rolled away, the happiness of the blessed inhabitants of heaven will be no nearer a termination than when it first began.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." They have escaped from this world of toil and suffering, and gone to enjoy the reward of all the good they have done or attempted to do, while here below. They dwell in the divine presence, where they enjoy advantages of enlarging their knowledge, inconceivably superior to any that could be had in the present life. They have become united to a holy and happy society, themselves holy and happy,—a society where love and friendship shall forever reign. All their desires are satisfied, in the vision and fruition of God. And their felicity will find neither limits to its extent, nor end to its duration.

From what has been said, we may see why the surviving friends of those who have died in the Lord are required not to sorrow, on their account, as those who have no hope. While the painful scene of separation is passing, our feelings

are altogether under the government of sense, and we weep to think of what our friend endures in the last agony. When this scene is over, affection succeeds to the control of our minds, and we still weep, when we think that we shall enjoy the company, no more on earth, of one so much beloved. But here, at length, when the sympathies of nature have obtained relief, and affection has poured the tribute of her tears over the memory of the departed, faith should take her sway, and looking to that life and immortality which are brought to light in the gospel, and hearing the voice that proclaims from heaven the joyful sentiment contained in the text, she should dry up our tears, compose our minds to a humble acquiescence in the will of Heaven, and open our hearts to sentiments of joy and gratitude to Him that *died*, and by dying, conquered death for all his followers.

That she whose death has furnished the occasion for this discourse, was among their number, and is now gone to partake in their glory and blessedness, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt.

It is not necessary that I should say much on her general character, in this place; and what shall be said, shall be said, not with a view of bestowing the testimony of our feeble commendation upon one who can now be affected neither by the praises of friends nor the censures of enemies, but for the purpose of expressing our sense of the goodness and grace of God, who was pleased to bless our society here with the presence of one whom he had distinguished by his choicest endowments. Among these, I deem it not improper to notice, in the first place, the superior personal attractions with which she was gifted. And I mention them in this place, because, though lowest in importance, they appeared on the person of the deceased with so much modesty, that she seemed utterly unconscious of possessing them. Beauty in woman, like genius in man,

when possessed without vanity, is an infallible indication of superior worth. It is an advantage which the hand of the Creator bestows upon the human form for the most benevolent purposes ; and religion refuses her sanction to that austerity of temper which renders men insensible to any of His gifts. In the softer sex especially, it conciliates regard, and is capable of adding new charms to virtue itself. When it exists upon the outward form, as the symbol and reflexion of those moral excellencies which reign within, the most stoical must acknowledge its power. So the rainbow in the heavens spreads its arch of glory over the copious shower, as it distills to bless the earth with plenty, and at the same time exhibits itself to the eye of the admiring spectator as the appointed pledge of the Creator's forbearance towards our guilty world.

The mind of the deceased was of the highest order—a fine imagination, an excellent memory, a strong and discriminating understanding. With these powers of intellect were joined a strength and delicacy of moral feeling, a native elevation of soul, and in short, all those attributes which go to constitute original greatness. These noble faculties of the mind and capacities of the heart, were expanded, improved, and refined by a suitable education ; so that there was no qualification necessary to constitute an accomplished woman, which she did not possess in an eminent degree.

There is one respect in which the deceased deserves to be held up to the imitation of those of her sex who would wish, as she was, to be loved and esteemed ; and that is, that her character was purely feminine. For my meaning here, since it cannot be adequately set forth in few words, I must refer you to her whose example and manner of life will, I trust, remain long in the memory of many who now hear me. Suffice it to say, that both Nature and Divine Revelation have clearly pointed out the virtues which are specifically

appropriate to her whom the Creator designed, from her distinctive qualities and sphere of action, to be at once the "glory" and the "help-meet" of man. From the same sources we learn what are the vices to which, by her nature and condition, she is most exposed. To practice those and shun these, is the perfection of woman. A sickly refinement, and a masculine coarseness; an airy frivolity which is pleased only with trifles; and an arrogant ambition which disdains to "mind" any but "high things;" an infantine imbecility governed always by prejudice and passion, and an headlong forwardness which is confident and bold because it sees nothing and knows nothing; a waxen pliability which, indifferently, receives every impression, and an adamantine obstinacy which neither the fire of charity, nor the force of argument can subdue; these are the extremes to which females are supposed to be peculiarly prone; and they are extremes which none ever avoided, with greater constancy and exactness, than she whose character is now the subject of remark.

Her religious character was distinctly marked with all those traits which are drawn in the passage of Sacred Scripture which has been selected as our subject on this occasion. The sorrows which she most sensibly felt were such as proceed from moral causes, and can only be experienced by a pious heart. Her works were works of righteousness; decidedly "good." Her dependence for acceptance with God was "in the Lord" Jesus. Her religion did not appear with that unnatural prominence in one part of her character, which, where this is the case, is compensated by a proportional defect in the other parts. It was even and uniform, like a well adjusted dress on a comely person, covering the body equally, and "without spot or wrinkle." It was not the subject of observation and remark, for this very reason, that it was *natural*. You did not observe in

her any confident pretensions, or any ostentatious display of superior sanctity—qualities always to be suspected, and which, when connected as they generally are, with a temper impatient of opposition or reproof, and at the same time, harsh, censorious, and vindictive, are the infallible indications of hypocrisy. She loved the Bible, the Sabbath, the ordinances, and the people of God. Never was she heard to pronounce a harsh sentence upon the conduct or state of any, whatever treatment she, or her friends, might have received from them. That beautiful encomium, passed by Solomon on “the virtuous woman,” might have been applied to her, with singular justness and propriety: “On her tongue dwelt the law of kindness.” Yet she knew how to discriminate. She did not overlook moral distinctions. She took a lively interest in the benevolent institutions of the day, and contributed her aid and exertions cheerfully and systematically to countenance and support them. In deeds of charity she felt peculiar delight. Her views of gospel truth were clear and extensive; and her hope of eternal salvation was founded on the atonement for sin which was perfected by Jesus Christ upon the cross. Her confidence in the goodness of her state was never very strong; for she was jealous of her heart and fearful lest a promise being left her of entering into rest she might seem to come short of it. But as she saw death approaching, her spiritual courage rose, and her hope became confirmed in a very remarkable manner, till at length, it was, as the “anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that within the vail.”

There is a sort of awful sacredness in those things which take place in the chambers of the dying, which requires that they should not be exposed without reserve to the public eye. We shall, therefore, present to you the scene—the mournful scene it cannot be justly called—which it was our

privilege lately to witness—in the simplest manner, and without that coloring which the partiality of friendship is apt to impart to narratives of this kind. When the life of the departed has been of the same character with their death, and when the latter has been such as to reflect honor upon religion, as was the case here, we can see no impropriety in stating the manner and character of the closing scene to the public. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” And it ought to be precious in the sight of his church, the members of which, while they feel their own loss, in the departure of one from their communion here below, ought to console themselves in the reflection, that what is their loss is the gain of the departed, and that the church triumphant has received an accession of another of the “redeemed” to their communion. The head of the church deserves too on such an occasion a public testimony to be given to his goodness and power, in granting victory over death to one of his followers. The living, who know that they must die, should have the benefit of such examples as may teach them how they may die safely. Those timorous believers who seem likely to pass their whole life time in bondage through fear of death, need the encouragement which a scene such as the one we are about to notice is calculated to give, in the confident expectation that the Lord, the Saviour, in whom they trust, will not desert them in a dying hour. And those who are careless and unconcerned on the subject of their own mortality ought to have the death scene of the Christian depicted before them, to terrify them, if possible, with the idea which, by contrast, such a scene is calculated to present, with that which must be acted in their own last moments, should they suddenly be called out of time into eternity.

During that most affecting and deeply interesting scene to which I shall now briefly direct your attention—for to

describe it adequately would be utterly impossible—such was the perfect composure of spirit which the happy sufferer exhibited, that not so much as a sigh, or a groan, or even the slightest expression of uneasiness escaped her lips. A considerable time was spent in offering up prayers in her behalf to a throne of grace, and in reciting to her passages from the word of God appropriate to her circumstances. The intervals between these exercises she employed in speaking to those around her of the goodness and grace of God as manifested towards her, and in expressing her sense of her own unworthiness. She had been sorely tried with afflictions, which she praised and blessed the Lord for sanctifying to her, and making the means of destroying that bias to the things of the present life, by which so many are prevented from seeking their chief good in God, and laying up treasure in heaven. “Nothing,” she said “but free—sovereign—sovereign omnipotent grace could have pardoned her ‘scarlet sins’ and brought her into the Kingdom.” On this subject she adverted, with great interest, to a sentiment which had, many years before, been expressed to her by an aged and pious friend, that if ever she were brought into the good ways of the Lord, it must be by the rod of affliction. “And so” said she “I have found it.” O the goodness of God, that such a sinner as I should have been arrested—arrested”—Here her voice faltered, from the strength of her rising emotions. After some time she recovered herself so far as to express with inimitable energy, her gratitude to God for adopting this method, though severe, of accomplishing towards her the purposes of his mercy. She said she had often looked forward to the scene through which she was now passing, as that which might probably prove to be the closing scene of her life, and that she had often and earnestly prayed that the Lord would make his grace sufficient for her, and lift up the light of his coun-

tenance upon her, so that she might enjoy comfort and peace in her last moments. “And now God has heard and answered my poor requests. O how comfortably do I feel! Can this *be* a delusion.” When told that her hope and joy could not prove delusive if founded on Him who is the “tried corner-stone—the sure foundation that God has laid in Zion;” she replied, “there I desire to repose all my trust, for I have nothing in myself.”

The family having been called in at her request, she took, successively, each one by the hand, and with tones of affection which penetrated every heart, addressing each—“My dear brother—dear sister,” &c., and giving the younger members of the family particularly, her solemn counsel and last admonition, she closed each separate address with a prayer articulated in a full and distinct tone of voice, and closed by an emphatical Amen. When she addressed her husband, she threw her arms around his neck, and embracing him, spoke to him in a suppressed tone of voice, so that what she said, was not heard by others. I have since learned, that the address related to himself, exhorting and encouraging him to be reconciled to the events of Divine Providence, and to bow in resignation to the will of heaven—and to her infant child, requesting him to take special care of its education; to have it brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”—and to her mother, asking him to continue his kindness towards her as heretofore. Then she resumed her former distinct and audible manner of utterance, in prayer for him. Then extending her hand to her mother, and taking her by the hand, she said, “Dear mother, you have been a kind mother to me, and O, I love you, and will love you to the last; put your trust in God, and He will never forsake you.” Then she took leave of me, in a most appropriate and affectionate prayer to God in my behalf; and I shall ever account it as one of the most valuable privileges, that I was

permitted to witness such a scene, and to participate in such prayers. Then she prayed, (her voice still full, and her utterance distinct,) for all her friends, present and absent, and when she had finished, turning to me, she said, "Now offer up one prayer more—one fervent prayer in my behalf—that I may be freed from all pollution, and be completely prepared to leave this world of pollution, and go to the presence of the Lord—the regions of purity." Her request was complied with. A portion of the 23d Psalm having been repeated, she said, "sing." A verse or two was sung. At length, having exerted her voice for a considerable time, she seemed overcome by the effort, and appeared, for a few moments, lost in an attempt to recollect something. Her looks indicated a painful eagerness which cannot be communicated in words. On a sudden every feature kindled into animation, and extending her hand to me, she said, "My child—baptize my child." O the sacred power of nature—the strength of maternal tenderness and affection! None had thought for some time, about the infant. The mother engrossed every mind, except her own. She had given proof that all her other friends had a place in her heart, and now, though the chilling hand of death was upon her vitals, she could not forget the little one—happy in being unconscious of the loss which it was about to sustain. The infant was brought. It was a moment of deep, tender, inexpressible interest. We were overwhelmed. It seemed as though the Great and Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep, and who carries the *lamb* in his bosom, had bowed his heavens and come down, and stood revealed in his glory before us. It seemed as if He had come to take into his special guardianship the helpless babe, as if he cast a look of ineffable benignity upon the dying mother, saying, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." The babe

and the mother were commended to "the Angel of the Covenant." This was the closing scene. She said nothing afterwards except expressing, in few words and in a faint and feeble tone, her desire to be remembered to her absent friends, particularly mentioning the name of a venerable clergyman whom she highly esteemed.* Having committed all that she held dear on earth, into the hands of her Redeemer, she sweetly resigned herself to death, like one gently and insensibly falling into the repose of sleep.

Now, my dear hearers, let me solemnly ask, are you prepared to die? You know you must die. The time you know not. It may be soon—too soon. Call up the scene to your view. Imagine that the physician has given you up, and retired—that your friends are assembled around your bed—that a sinking, now for the first time felt at the seat of life, and a strange agony, tell you that your last hour has come—that the room grows darker and darker as the mists of death settle more and more densely upon your eyelids—and that an endless eternity unprepared and unprovided for, present before you its appalling realities. Ah! whither will you fly for relief in that dread moment! To procrastination? your accustomed resort. The bare recollection that your life has been spent to the very last moment in procrastination, will cut you to the heart. To Christ? A Saviour so often offered, and so often rejected! What encouragement can you have? How will you banish the sound of these terrible words, "Because I called and ye refused," &c. Have you not too long rejected the calls of mercy already? In God's great name I demand, have you any time to lose? Not a moment. Delay not a moment then. And may the Lord so teach you to number your days, that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom! And, surely, it is

* Dr. Anderson.

an obvious dictate of wisdom, immediately to make preparation for an event which may arrive at any moment. To be "in the Lord" is an indispensable part of the preparation. Men may amuse themselves with imaginary notions of being just with God, so long as they consider death as at a distance ; but when the awful crisis draws nigh, and they are forced to take a near prospect of the eternal world, and of meeting there with God their final and impartial judge, all such notions are put to flight, and they begin to feel their need of some surer ground of hope, than that which their own supposed goodness can supply. Think of this, now, while in health ; and as sinners, standing in need of pardon and sanctification, come to Christ for these blessings, that so, after a life spent in performing good works, and in enduring whatever it may please the Lord to appoint for you of suffering, you may, when death shall arrive, realize the blessedness of those described in the text.

THE END.

